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ABSTRACT

A course in the Bible as Literature is presented. It is an examination ot significant selections from the old and new testaments, representing universality in theme, diversity in literary genre, and consideration of biblical language. Performance objectives for the student include: (1) proposal ot reasons for studying the Bible as literature, (2) identification of problems and themes considered in certain biblical selections, (3) contrasting of the handling of problems in a biblical selection and a contemporary selection, (4) application of literaty standards to biblical selections, (5) determination ot the characteristics of Hebrew poetry, (6) recognition of the variations in biblical translations, (7) illustration ot the influence of Biblical diction on subsequent language and literature, and (8) demonstration of the influence of biblical material on artists and musicians of all ages. Course content centers around overview of biblical structure, values of Bible, comparison ot handling of recurring problems in biblical and contemporary literature, examination of biblical poetry, survey of history of biblical translations, examinations of selections from King James Bible, and demonstration of humanistic appeal of biblical material as influencing artists and musicians of all ages. Teacher strategies include lecturing and the use of recorded versions of the Bible. (CK)

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AUTHORIZED COURSE OF INSTRUCTION FOR THE QUINMESTER PROGRAM

English and Humanities: The Bible as Literature 5114.79
5115.79
5116.79
5148.07 Lit. Wld.

CS 200 037

DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

DIVISION OF INSTRUCTION • 1971

ED 065863

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THE BIBLE AS LITERATURE

5114.79
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5148.07 LIT. WLD

English and Humanities

Written by
Gretchen C. Hankins
for the
DIVISION OF INSTRUCTION
Dade County Public Schools
Miami, Florida
1971

CS 200 037

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Course Number	COURSE TITLE: THE BIBLE AS LITERATURE
5114.79	COURSE DESCRIPTION: An examination of significant selections from the old and new testaments, representing universality in theme, diversity in literary genre, and consideration of biblical language.
5115.79	
5116.79	
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I. PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES:

A. Given the King James Bible, the student will examine its overall structure and propose reasons for studying the Bible as literature.

B. Given certain biblical selections, the student will identify the universal problems, questions, and themes considered therein.

C. Given a biblical selection and a contemporary selection, the student will contrast the handling of the problem or theme in each case.

D. Given biblical selections, the student will contrast their form and substance with works dealing with the same themes or subjects by writers of other times and places.

E. Having discussed basic literary standards appropriate to various prose genre, the student will apply these criteria to biblical selections.

F. Having examined biblical poetry, the student will determine inductively characteristics of Hebrew poetry.

G. Given selections from the King James Bible and other translations, the student will recognize the variations in biblical translations.

H. Given examples of diction from the King James Bible, the student will illustrate its influence on subsequent language and literature.

I. Given opportunity for preparation and research, the student will demonstrate by classroom presentations the influence of biblical material on artists and musicians of all ages.

II. COURSE CONTENT:

A. Rationale

The suggested selections for this course have been chosen for the following reasons:

To exemplify the universality of the problems presented in the Bible which have concerned all men of all ages - problems concerning the nature and existence of God, man and his ultimate destiny, the place of man in the universe, and the undeserved suffering of the just.

To illustrate the artistic talent of biblical writers who skillfully employ various forms of prose and poetry to accomplish their purposes.

To indicate the influence of the Bible on subsequent writers and to cause students to become aware of the literary merits and characteristics of biblical language.

B. Range of subject matter

1. Overview of structure of Bible and introduction to Hebrew people and land
2. Values of Bible as creative as well as spiritual revelation
3. Study of universal themes, problems and questions in biblical literature
4. Comparison of handling of recurrent problems in biblical and contemporary literature
5. Contrast of interpretation of biblical themes or subject matter by authors of other times and talents with their biblical sources
6. Discussion of prose selections from Bible as illustrative of various literary genre
7. Examination of biblical poetry based on types and poetic technique
8. Survey of history of biblical translations and differentiation between King James and contemporary translations
9. Examinations of selections from King James Bible to discern effect on subsequent language and literature
10. Demonstration of humanistic appeal of biblical material as influencing artists and musicians of all ages

III. TEACHER STRATEGIES AND STUDENT ACTIVITIES

A. Objective. Given the King James Bible, the student will examine the overall structure and propose reasons for studying the Bible as literature.

1. Teacher Strategies

a. Lecture on comprehensive overview of Bible
*(Reference: The Bible and the Common Reader - Mary Ellen Chase.
Chapter 1 - What is the Bible?
Chapter 2 - The King James Version: Its History and Value
The Bible for Students of Art and Literature - G. B. Harrison.)
Introduction

b. Elicit from students reasons for studying Bible as literature, including the following:

Its relation to universal problems and themes of literature

Its artistic use of various literary genre
Its influence on subsequent language and literature

2. Student Activities

a. Research in library and report to class on such subjects as reason for categories of biblical books (i.e. historical, prophetical, etc.), apocryphal books, scholarly opinions on authorship and dates of origin of various books and their arrangement in sequence.

b. Prepare brief reports on such enrichment subjects as "Everyday Life in Old Testament Times," "Famous Women of the Bible," "The Land, Wildlife and People of the Bible," "Decisive Battles of the Bible," etc.

c. Make chart or acetate showing relative chronology of ancient civilizations.

d. Draw map of areas important in biblical times.

B. Objective. Given certain biblical selections, the student will identify the universal problems, questions, or themes considered therein.

1. Teacher Strategies

a. Play record of first three chapters of Genesis or read aloud to class.

b. Explain briefly the origin, content and purpose of the Pentateuch.

2. Student Activities

a. Discern what universal questions are dealt with in these chapters, including what is the origin of the world and man and how did evil come into the world.

b. Compare the explanation given in Genesis for the origin of the world and introduction of evil with explanations given by Sumerian, Egyptian, Greek and Norse writings.

c. Read Psalm 8 to discover answer to fundamental question concerning man's rightful place in the universe.

d. Read Psalm 137 and comment on irony of the first six lines as related to subsequent history of Jewish people.

e. Read Psalm 139 and determine the relationship of God to man.

*(Note: Complete bibliographic citation and information regarding records suggested can be found under TEACHER RESOURCES.)

C. Objective. Given a biblical selection and a contemporary selection, the student will contrast the handling of the problem or theme considered therein.

1. Teacher Strategies

a. Lecture on Job as a spiritual epic
(Reference: The Bible and the Common Reader - Chase
The Book of Job - p. 204
The English Bible as Literature - C. A. Dinsmore
Chapter XI - Biblical Poetry)

b. Suggest that Job (Chapters 15-27), which is largely repetitious, be optional reading, especially for slow readers.

c. Play recording The Book of Job, in which Herbert Marshall reads shortened version.

d. As J. B. is read, explain techniques of non-realistic modern theater and clarify roles of Nickles and Zuss.

e. Before assigning class-written themes, establish some criteria for evaluation of essays.

2. Student Activities:

a. Read Job and discuss in small groups some of the following points:
Account for the differences in tone and form between the Prologue and Epilogue and the poem itself.
What use did the author make of the traditional folk-tale?
What are the five well-defined parts of Job?
What is the difference between Job's attitude toward his problem and his friends' attitude?
In what different ways do the friends explain Job's suffering?
What belief are the three friends spokesmen for?
What is most distressing and unacceptable to Job?
In what way does God commend Job and censor his friends?

b. Write several paragraphs defending the statement that Job is not only spiritually renewed but intellectually satisfied with God's revelation.
Write several paragraphs stating what conclusion you can draw as to the concept of man's position in the universe as presented in Job.
Substantiate your position by quoting from Job.

c. Read J. B. aloud in class and discuss the following points:

How does the introduction of Zuss and Nickles effect a difference in the plot of J. B. since they do not appear in Job?
What events take place in J. B. and not in Job?
How are the endings different?
How does the character of J. B. differ from Job?
What character plays a much more important role in J. B. than in Job?
How are the messengers of disaster more clearly identified in J. B.?
How have the comforters been updated in J. B.?
What character is omitted from J. B.?
What is the contrast in the framework of the two works?
What is the contrast in the respective settings?
How does the difference in endings point up the difference in theme?
What is the contrast in diction in the two works?
Do both vary in levels of diction?

d. Write in class on one or more of the following topics:
Explain the different solutions which are presented in the Book of Job and J. B. to the problem of human suffering, evaluating which answer seems to be more philosophically sound? more dramatically effective?

Using one of the following quotations, explain its significance in relation to both the biblical Job and the 20th century J. B.
(1) "There is no coming to consciousness without pain." Jung
(2) "Man searches for God, and searching, finds him." Aeschylus

Compare/contrast the creative revelation of the authors of Job and J. B., expanding the following points:
(1) unique form and flavor of individual talent
(2) use of idiom and context of his own times
(3) attitude toward and resolution of universal problem

D. Objective. Given biblical selections, the student will contrast their form and substance with works dealing with the same theme or subjects by writers of other times and places.

1. Teacher Strategies

a. Play recording Samson Agonistes with Michael Redgrave

b. Show film The Tragedy of John Milton, (26 minutes)

2. Student Activities

a. Listen to or read Milton's Samson Agonistes and the story of Samson in Judges 13-16.

b. Compare by citing evidence from texts the character of the biblical Samson with Milton's Samson.

c. Read a Greek tragedy such as Prometheus, Oedipus at Colonus, or Agamemnon and contrast with Samson Agonistes on basis of dramatic techniques and portrayal of protagonists.

d. Read folk-tales regarding feats of Paul Bunyan and compare with deeds of Samson.

e. Read the tragedy of Saul as related in Samuel I, Chapter 9-31 and contrast with Greek tragedy such as Ajax or Oedipus Rex.

f. Contrast the content and form of Genesis, Chapter 1, with James Weldon Johnson's poem, "The Creation."

g. Discuss Byron's use of source material for his poem "The Destruction of Sennacherib" by reading II Kings 19:35.

h. Read T. S. Eliot's poem, "Journey of the Magi" and contrast its tone, purpose and handling of subject matter with Matthew, Chapter 2, Verses 1-12.

E. Objective. Having discussed literary standards appropriate to various prose genre, the student will apply these criteria to biblical selections.

1. Teacher Strategies

a. Conduct class discussion to review and list identifying characteristics of short story, novelette, biography, letter, parable, saga.

b. Play Judith and Ruth - excerpts read by Claire Bloom and Judith Anderson

2. Student Activities

a. Divide into small groups and choose from suggested list biblical selections after deciding to deal with one of following types of prose literature:

Read selections, discuss and critique on basis of established criteria.
Short Story - Ruth - Jonah - Judith - Tobit
Novelette - Esther
Biography - David, Solomon, Christ (Luke)
Parables - New Testament (Luke for Prodigal Son and Good Samaritan)
Saga - Jacob - Joseph (family epic)
Letters - St. Paul

b. Compare a letter of St. Paul's with one of Cicero's and one of Lord Chesterfield's as to style and purpose.

c. Write a modern parable imitating the economy and precision of language of biblical parables but using modern setting, characters and idiom.

F. Objective. Having examined types of biblical poetry, narrative, lyric and didactic, the student will determine inductively characteristics of Hebrew poetry.

1. Teacher Strategies

a. Play recordings or read aloud examples of biblical poetry making sure students understand the meaning of paralellism and imagery as poetic devices.

b. Use Psalms, Song of Songs, Ecclesiastes (Chapters 3 and 12) and Deborah's Song, Judges, Chapter 5.

2. Student Activities

a. Choose a Psalm and identify kinds of parallelism used in it as being based on repetition of ideas, cause and effect, contrast or antithesis, questions and answers.

b. Choose a Psalm and select visual images which clarify by relating to everyday life or which render the material vivid and poetic by challenging the imagination.

c. Find a brief poem on a religious subject such as John Donne's "Holy Sonnets" or George Herbert's "The Pulley" or "The Windbover" or "God's Grandeur" by Gerard Manley Hopkins and contrast its meter, tone, rhyme scheme, imagery, and purpose with a Psalm of your choosing.

d. Locate an English or Scottish ballad such as "Edward, Edward" or "Sir Patrick Spens," or "Johnnie Armstrong" and compare with the Song of Deborah as to use of understatement, omission and economy in portraying a tragic situation.

G. Objective. Given selections from the King James Bible and other translations, student will recognize the variations in biblical translation.

1. Teacher Strategies

a. Lecture on the diction of the Bible
(References: The English Bible as Literature - Dinsmore
Chapter VII
The Bible and the Common Reader - Chase)

b. Play recording "The Changing English Language" to show gradual evolution of sound of language from Wycliffe to modern English.

2. Student Activities

a. Research and report briefly on history of biblical translations.

b. Compare versions of Psalm 23 as translated by Wycliffe, King James Version and Anchor Bible of 1965.

c. Bring a modern translation of Bible to class and read aloud a short selection, contrasting vocabulary, rhythm and sound effects with similar material in King James version.

H. Objective. Given examples of diction from the King James Bible, the student will illustrate its influence on subsequent language and literature.

1. Teacher Strategies

a. Suggest certain famous sayings, familiar phrases, titles of books and plays such as
(1) Judge not that ye be not judged...No man can serve two masters...The wages of sin is death...He that spareth his rod hateth his son...The truth shall make them free.
(2) salt of the earth - thorn in the flesh - skin of our teeth - heap coals of fire - through a glass darkly - pearls before swine
(3) The Grapes of Wrath; The Young Lions: Generation of Vipers; Lilies of the Field; The Power and the Glory.

b. Establish the difference between a fable and a parable.

2. Student Activities

a. Using a Concordance or consulting outside sources, as well as searching Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, compile a list of well-known plays, novel titles and familiar sayings and phrases from the Bible. Pool your findings for group presentation.

b. Select a proverb from the Bible and write a fable or parable illustrating its meaning.

c. Scan writings of Emerson, Thoreau, Melville, Whittier, Milton and other authors and make a list of at least five biblical allusions from their works.

d. Compare Lincoln's Gettysburg or Second Inaugural addresses or Patrick Henry's famous speech with biblical diction.

I. Objective. Given opportunity for preparation and research, students will demonstrate in classroom presentations the influence of biblical material on artists and musicians of all ages.

1. Teacher Strategies

Assign these humanities-oriented projects at beginning of quinmester so students will have time to find filmstrips, slides, reproductions of paintings and musical recordings for five or ten minute presentation to the class. These fine arts presentations make a suitable culminating activity to this quinmester.

2. Student Activities

Divide into small groups to find reproductions or slides (from art department or library) of famous paintings or sculpture based on biblical subjects. Individuals within groups should read passage from Bible on which each paining is based and briefly identify the painting with the artist and the time in which it was produced.

Other groups may choose to relate biblical selections to musical compositions which they have inspired such as Handel's Messiah, Saint-Saen's Samson and Delilah or to such Negro Spirituals as "Joshua Fit the Battle of Jericho" or "Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego." Students may find recordings of appropriate selections or elect to perform them by playing and singing.

Suggestions for art works which have dealt with the following biblical subjects:

Old Testament	New Testament
Murder of Cain by Abel	Wedding at Cana
Abraham and Isaac	The Flight into Egypt
Adam and Eve in Eden	Herod and the Wise Men
Tower of Babel	The Last Supper
The Creation	Raising of Lazarus
Delilah and Samson	Prodigal Son
The Deluge	Agony in the Garden
Hebrews in Fiery Furnace	Kiss of Judas
Crossing of the Red Sea	Holy Family
Judgment of Solomon	Nativity, Crucifixion, Resurrection

IV. STUDENT RESOURCES

A. State-adopted Texts

Carlsen, G. Robert, General Editor, Encounters: Themes in Literature, St. Louis: Webster Division, McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1967. "Parable of Good Samaritan," pp. 1-4; "Parable of The Prodigal Son," pp. 125-6; Verses from Ecclesiastes, p. 247.

Harrison, G. B., General Editor, Major British Writers, New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1967. (Samson Agonistes, pp. 273-93)

Macmillan Literary Heritage, English Tradition: Non-Fiction, New York: Macmillan Company, 1968. (Book of Ruth, pp. 25-35; Psalms 8, 90, 121, 137, 139, 147, pp. 16-25)
Maline, Julian and James Berkeley, General Editors, Poets and Critics 1485-1789 Singer/Random House Literature Series, New York: L. W. Singer Company, 1967. (Psalms 8,23,24,192,193)

B. Textbooks

King James Authorized Version of Bible
Major British Writers, Harcourt Brace, (contains Samson Agonistes)
J. B. Archibald MacLeish, Houghton Mifflin, 1958 (paperback)

C. Reference materials (available in high school libraries)

Easy Reading

Living Personalities of the Old Testament, Hagen Stacck, Harper & Row, 1964
The Mighty Ones - Great Men and Women of Early Bible Days, Meindert deJong, Harper, 1959
Words from Exodus, Isaac Asimov, Houghton Mifflin, 1963
Words in Genesis, Isaac Asimov, Houghton Mifflin, 1962
Lands of the Bible, Samuel Terrien, Simon and Schuster, 1958
The Golden Bible Atlas, Samuel Terrien, Golden Press
The Bible Book by Book, Stephen Usherwood, W. W. Horton & Co., 1962
God is For Real, Man, Carl F. Burke, Association Press, 1970
Cave of Riches, Alan Honour, Whittlesey House, McGraw-Hill, 1956

Average Reading

The Greatest Book Ever Written, Fulton Oursler, Doubleday & Co., 1953
Everyday Life in Old Testament Times, H. W. Heaton, Charles Scribner's, 1956
Decisive Battles of the Bible, Edward Longstreth, J. B. Lippincott, 1962
All of the Women of the Bible, Edith Deen, Harper & Bros., 1955
The Land, Wildlife and People of the Bible, Peter Farb, Harper & Row, 1967
6000 Years of the Bible, J. G. Oncken Verlag Kassel, Harper & Row, 1963

Advanced Reading

The God of Space and Time, Bernad J. Cooke, Holt, Rinehart, 1969
The World of the Bible, Anton Jirku, World Publishing Co., 1967
The Bible as History, Werner Keller, William Morrow & Co., 1961
Prophets, Idols and Diggers, John Elder, Bobbs Merrill, 1960
The Scrolls from the Dead Sea, Edmund Wilson, Oxford U. Press, 1956

Art References

History of Art, H. W. Janson, Prentice-Hall Inc., 1963

Metropolitan Seminars in Art, John Canady, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1958 (Series of books with detachable reproductions)

Suggested Translations of Bible

New English Bible, Oxford U. Press, 1961
Jerusalem Bible, Alexander Jones, Jr., Doubleday, 1966
Bible, English, T. Nelson Co., 1952 (revised standard)
New Translation of the Bible, Edwin Robertson, Allenson, 1959
Bible: An American Translation ed, Smith & Goodspeed, U. of Chicago Press, 1970
Bible, English, Catholic Book Publishing Co., 1957

VI. TEACHER RESOURCES:

A. State-adopted Texts

Carlsen, G. Robert, General Editor, Encounters: Themes in Literature, St. Louis: Webster Division, McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1967. "Parable of Good Samaritan," pp. 1-4; "Parable of The Prodigal Son," pp. 125-6; Verses from Ecclesiastes, p. 247.
Harrison, G. B., General Editor, Major British Writers, New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1967. (Samson Agonistes, pp. 273-93)
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Maline, Julian and James Berkeley, General Editors, Poets and Critics 1485-1789
Singer/Random House Literature Series, New York: L. W. Singer Company, 1967. (Psalms 8, 23, 24, 192, 193)

B. Professional Books:

The Bible and the Common Reader, Mary Ellen Chase, The Macmillan Co., 1955
The English Bible as Literature, Charles Allen Dinsmore Houghton Mifflin Co., 1931
The Bible for Students of Art and Literature, G. B. Harrison Doubleday & Co., 1964
Adventures in World Literature, Harcourt Brace, rev., 1970 (text and teacher's manual)

C. Media Resources:

Records: (all prices approximate)

Psalms: A Selection, Laurence Olivier reading; interludes comprise a choral rendition of traditional melodies.
Lorraine Music #584 $5.35
Genesis: The Creation and Noah, Judith Anderson reads
Lorraine Music #592 $5.85
Book of Judith, Book of Ruth, Judith Anderson and Claire Bloom read
Lorraine Music #591 $5.85

Ecclesiastes, James Mason Reads
Listening Library RL 2 $6.50
Genesis: Daniel and I Samuel - Charles Laughton reads
Listening Library RL 5 $6.50
Job, Herbert Marshall and cast read shortened version
Listening Library RL 6 $6.50
Samson Agonistes, Milton, Michael Redgrave
Listening Library DR 71 $12.95
Hallelujah Chorus, Mormon Tabernacle Choir sings several Handel choruses based on Old Testament
Educational Record Sales $5.98
The Changing English Language, Vol I & II

Movies:

David and Goliath, color 95 minutes
Ideal Pictures - rental $27.50
Gospel According to St. Matthew, 136 minutes
Ideal Pictures - rental $110
The Tragedy of John Milton, 26 minutes
McGraw-Hill Films - rental $11
The Law and the Prophets, color 51 minutes
(recreation of Bible by means of art works)
McGraw-Hill Films - rental $35